

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sycamore Valley

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number State Road 1400☐ not for publicationcity, town Grassy Creek☒ vicinitystate North Carolina code NCcounty Granvillecode 077zip code 27507

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>6</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u>2</u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>9</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic and Architectural Resources of GranvilleCounty North CarolinaNumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling
Agriculture/Subsistence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling
Agriculture/Subsistence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

MIXED Other: transitional Georgian/Federal
Federal
Georgian
Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls aluminum

roof asphalt
other wood
brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 DESCRIPTION

A striking plantation seat, the expansive, tripartite Sycamore Valley stands within sight of the fields and outbuildings that served it during Granville County's plantation and bright leaf tobacco eras. The three-part form of the eight-bay wide dwelling - its two-story central block is flanked by lower two-story wings - was attained through a number of additions and alterations made prior to the Civil War. The dwelling is unique in the county in its display of the variety of styles popular during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, the Georgian, the Federal, the transition in between and the later Greek Revival. Although covered with narrow, beaded aluminum siding, applied over its original beaded weatherboards in 1986, almost all of its other decorative features maintain their integrity and are intact and in excellent condition.

The house stretches in a long rectangular run from a flush gable end marked by a rock and brick chimney at the east to a similarly finished gable end at the west. The two-story, south-facing, front facade turns an impressive expanse towards the front grounds and, in the distance, the main road. The house's bulk is seen as less substantial than apparent, however, when its one-room depth is viewed from the side. A late nineteenth century porch, outfitted with chamfered posts and sawn brackets, shades the long front elevation. A long one-story ell, also built in the late nineteenth century, stretches to the rear of its east wing; originally separated from the house by a roofed breezeway, it is now fully attached to the structure.

The mixture of styles and floor heights throughout the downstairs and upstairs rooms of Sycamore Valley indicates that the front block was not raised all at once. The center block and east wing are the house's oldest sections, built at or near the same time. Transitional Georgian/Federal style mantels and flush sheathed wainscoting adorning the single downstairs and upstairs rooms of the east wing bear an affinity to the finish of the single downstairs and upstairs rooms of the center block. The Federal style mantel of the downstairs room of the center block is the most elaborately worked decorative element in that block and the east wing. Shaped by a skilled craftsman - who incised, gouged and chiseled notches, circles, dentils, reeds and other delicate motifs into its surface - it is more completely Federal in style than other features in the two blocks, either because of its prominent location or because it was added at a later date. The center block and the east wing are separated by a stair and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

the wing additionally has a boxed stair of its own which leads to an upstairs room that is not connected with the rest of the dwelling's second floor. Though uncommon, other pre-Civil War dwellings in the county - including the Rufus Amis House at the county's northwestern corner - have disconnected upstairs rooms reached by separate stairs. The reason for this plan is locally attributed to a desire to separate the bedrooms of males and females.

The west wing and the center block are separated by a two-panel, Greek Revival style door and a step. This step, coupled with the slight setback of the wing's front elevation and, most tellingly, the beaded weatherboards of the former exterior wall of the center block that faces into the wing, indicates that the rooms were built at two separate dates. The mantel of the downstairs room of the west wing, which features unusual mid-length crossettes and molding reminiscent of three-part Georgian surrounds, appears to be the oldest decorative feature in the house. As the wing is the last built of the house's three front blocks, the mantel either came from another earlier dwelling or was moved from the central block to make way for that block's ornate Federal style mantel.

The upstairs rooms of the dwelling have a handsome finish not often found outside of first floor rooms in the county. The transitional Georgian/Federal style finish of the upstairs room of the east wing is almost identical to that of the room below it. A simply articulated, transitional Georgian/Federal style mantel with one recessed panel adorns the central upstairs bedroom. It is joined by an exceptionally finished door, its stiles and six raised panels wood-grained in almost abstract patterns. The bedroom above the west wing, lower by a step than the narrow hall that leads to it, has a more naturalistically finished, wood-grained, Federal style door, which has six flat panels edged with thin moldings. The post and lintel mantel of the room, however, is Greek Revival in style and decorated with a vernacular attempt at marbleizing that, from across the room, gives it the appearance of being imprinted with large, gray leaves. The Greek Revival style upstairs mantel of the west wing, coupled with the two-panel door of the room below, suggest that the wing was built in the quarter century that preceeded the Civil War. Its Georgian style downstairs mantel and Federal style upstairs door were apparently salvaged from an earlier incarnation of the house or from another dwelling.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

One outbuilding survives on the property from the plantation era, a mortised and tenoned smokehouse ["B" on attached sketch map], marked by flush gable ends, box cornices and some beaded weatherboards, that stands to the rear of the house [A]. To the smokehouse's rear is a large, late nineteenth or early twentieth century, frame dairy barn [E] and a non-contributing, mid-twentieth century, concrete block milking barn [D]. To the east of the smokehouse and dwelling are the farm pond, fields and outbuildings that are representative of the property's role during the bright leaf era as a tobacco farm. They include a log tobacco barn [I] and stable [G], a frame chicken house [C], corn crib [H] and packhouse [F] - raised in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries - and a non-contributing frame tobacco barn raised after 1960 [J].

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Agriculture

Period of Significance

1850s-1937

Significant Dates

1850s

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Sycamore Valley displays the most varied, intact array of refined decorative features of any extant property raised in Granville County during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century. Its Georgian, transitional Georgian/Federal, Federal and Greek Revival style motifs - crafted during the two or three different stages of construction of the front block - provide a catalog of the styles most popular in the county during those years. (See associated Property Types 1 - Georgian and Federal Style Dwellings - and 2 - Greek Revival and Romantic Style Dwellings) The fine craftsmanship displayed at these motifs - from the wood-graining of Georgian and Federal doors and the marbleizing of a Greek Revival mantel, to the carving and delicate molding of Georgian, transitional and Federal mantels - represents the abilities of local workmen, and the desires of local planters, during the county's plantation era. Owned by a number of different individuals during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, the house is representative of the wealth and desires of the county's planters; planters who apparently maintained close contacts with the more sophisticated world to the north and east and who tried to keep abreast of its changing styles. (See associated Historic Context 1 - The Plantation Era in Granville County, 1746-1865) The house and the surrounding 32 acres that are historically associated with it are also significant as representative of the lives of county farmers during the bright leaf tobacco era. (See associated Historic Context 2 - Bright Leaf Tobacco and Rural Granville County, 1866-1937) The surviving tobacco related and domestic outbuildings evoke the way of life of that era; a single surviving smokehouse from the plantation era also gives some sense of the lives of the house's earliest occupants. (See associated Property Type 6 - Outbuildings) The property has been in use as a traditional bright leaf tobacco farm within the past 50 years; its period of significance has been assigned a closing date of 1937, however, because it has not achieved exceptional importance within the past half century.

The exact dates of construction of the three main blocks of the house and the names of their builders is not known. John Stovall, the son of William Stovall, sold 107 acres of his father's former lands in 1820 to Issac Reid (or Read) for \$1,000 [Deed Book Z, Page 265]. (William had died in 1803.) The substantial sum paid by Reid suggests that a house and other improvements were standing on the property at this time, probably built by the Stovall family. The crossetted, flat-panel mantel

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

of the downstairs, west wing room may well date from the Stovalls' ownership of the land. This wing was not first built, however, and its Georgian mantel and upstairs, wood-grained, Federal door were probably taken either from other remodeled sections of the house or from another older dwelling.

The five years following 1820 saw the property change hands four more times. Reid sold it to Dr. James Field in 1821 [Deed Book 1, Page 88]. Field, in debt, sold it three years later to Henry Young [Deed Book 2, Page 169]. Young sold it to John and James Young in 1825 [Deed Book 2, Page 289], who in the same year sold it to Frederick M. and Robert K. Clack [Deed Book 2, Page 288]. Rounding out its pre-Civil War ownership, the house and 600 acre property, the acreage of which had increased with almost every transaction, were sold by the Clacks to Spencer C. Griffin in 1842 for \$2,320 [Deed Book 11, Page 302]. The Greek Revival style finish of a two-panel door and post and lintel mantel in the west wing, along with the physically apparent fact that it was later affixed to an original exterior wall of the center block, suggests that Griffin constructed the wing. Which of the many 1820s owners built the earlier center block and east wing of the front of the house cannot be determined from physical, stylistic, documentary or oral evidence.

In 1876, the Griffin family sold the house and farm to Laura A. Clement [Deed Book 31, Page 448], who deeded it to her son, Macon, in 1920 [Deed Book 77, Page 479]. Laura and her husband, Joseph, added the front porch and the one-story rear ell late in the nineteenth or early in the twentieth century and also built many of the outbuildings to serve their bright leaf tobacco operations. In 1944, the property was purchased by Jerry A. and Mae Timberlake [Deed Book 113, Page 32]. Their son, Jerry A. Timberlake, Jr., who purchased the property from them in 1961 [Deed Book 154, Page 139], added the siding over its original weatherboards.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.

Granville County Wills. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, N.C.

United States Manuscript Censuses. Microfilm located at Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 32 acres

UTM References

A

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

B

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

C

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

D

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

☒ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Marvin A. Brown/Architectural Historian & Patricia Esperon/Historian

organization Granville County- Oxford Historic Survey date 8/18/87

street & number P.O. Box 1556(State Historic Pres. Office) telephone 919-693-1491

city or town Oxford state N.C. zip code 27565

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 10 Page 1

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	712210	4043980
B	17	711830	4044040
C	17	711830	4043870
D	17	711920	4043880
E	17	712010	4043570
F	17	712270	4043680

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point A: 17 712210 4043980 on the USGS polygon continuing in a straight line west, along the edge of the woods, approximately 1000 feet to point B: 17 711830 4044040 on the polygon, where the tree line turns south. Continuing south in a straight line from point B on the polygon, along the edge of the woods, approximately 600 feet to point C: 17 711830 4043870 on the polygon, where the tree line turns east. Continuing from point C on the polygon in a straight line east, along the edge of the woods, approximately 300 feet to point D: 17 711920 4043880 on the polygon, where the tree line turns south. Continuing from point D on the polygon, in a straight line south, approximately 810 feet along the edge of the woods and through the farm clearing to point E: 17 712010 4043570 on the polygon, located on the northern edge of State Road 1400. Continuing along the northern edge of State Road 1400, approximately 960 feet to point F: 17 712270 4043680 on the polygon. Continuing from point F on the polygon in a straight line due north, approximately 1200 feet to the east of the frame corn crib, to the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Approximately 32 acres of the property that include the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 2

dwelling, outbuildings, fields and farm pond that have been a historic part of the property, maintain historic integrity, and convey the property's historic setting are being nominated for the National Register. Some of the acreage on the property has been excluded from the nomination either because of intruding structures or because the land is now woodland. In these cases the land use has substantially changed so that it no longer contributes to the historic integrity or historic significance of the property as a plantation or bright leaf era farm.

The northern boundary of the nominated property from UTM points A to B includes the fields and dwelling to its south and excludes woodland to its north. The western boundary from UTM points B to C and C to D includes the fields and dwelling to its east, and excludes woodland to its west. The western boundary from UTM points D to E includes the fields and dwelling to its east and excludes woodland and a house built within the last fifty years to its west. The southern boundary from UTM points E to F includes the field and the dwelling to its north and excludes property outside the owner's property boundaries to its south. The eastern boundary from UTM point F to A includes the farm pond and outbuildings to its west and excludes a tenant house built within the last fifty years to its east.

Contributing Buildings:

- A - "Sycamore Valley"
- B - Early/mid 19th century, mortise and tenon smokehouse
- F - Bright tobacco era, frame packhouse (late 19th/early 20th cent.)
- G - Bright tobacco era, log stable (late 19th/early 20th cent.)
- I - Bright tobacco era, log tobacco barn (late 19th/early 20th cent.)
- E - Bright tobacco era, frame dairy barn (late 19th/early 20th cent.)

Contributing Structures:

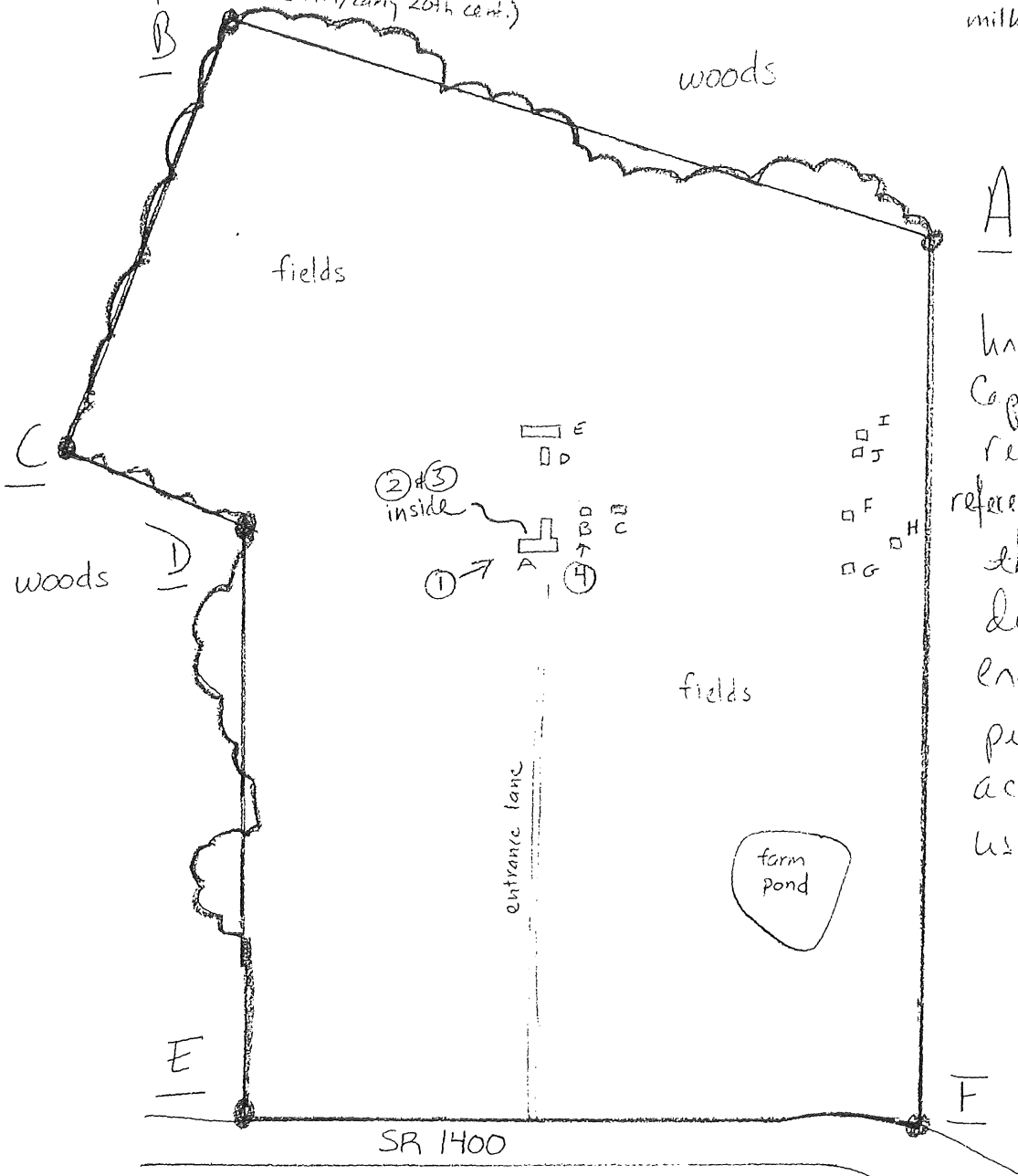
- C - Bright tobacco era, frame chicken house (late 19th/early 20th cent.)
- H - Bright tobacco era, frame corner b (late 19th/early 20th cent.)

Contributing Site

Cultivated fields

Non-Contributing Building

- J - Modern frame and me tobacco barn
- D - Modern concrete block milking barn



Underlined Capital letters represent the vertices of the polygon drawn to encompass the property on the accompanying USGS map.

approx. scale - 1" = 240 ft.

approx. 32 acres

SYCAMORE VALLEY
Granville County, NC

drawn by Marvin A. Brown, February, 1937

